and Intha-Som, who were too young to reign. The fact that they 643*
were underage opened the way to new competitions, to new inter- 175*
necine struggles and to new disorders which were to precipitate the 648*
kingdom's fall. Indeed, this confusion in the succession marks the
beginning of the end of Laotian unity.

TIAN-THALA, KING 1694-1700

The prime minister Tian-Thala, arguing from his marriage 643*
with the second daughter of the dead king, then seized power (1). 175*

1. G. Maspero notes: "A curious thing is that the Dutch traveler (Van Wusthof) had foreseen (as early as 1641) this succession, for he wrote: 'It is a custom among the people /428/ of Laos that no child may inherit unless he is born of a wife who has been declared and adopted as legitimate. The others who are born of concubines do not enter into account, so that if this king who has no relative on the paternal side had just died, since he has no son born of his legitimate wife, Tevinia-Assen (Tian-Thala) might very well take the crown.' " (Op. cot. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/). We must conclude that Tiao-Ratsabout had not yet been born in 1641 and that Tian-Thala must have been quite old in 1694.

NAN-THARAT, KING 1700.

Nan-Tharat, governor of Nakhone, /131/ at once disputed his 643*
succession, raised troops in the southern domains, defeated the 175*
royal army and dethroned Tian-Thala, who took poison (1700).
Souligna's grandsons had fled to Luang-Prabang.

Sai-Ong-Hue's advance recognition of Annamite suzerainty 643*
over Lan-Xang. (1696). The reign of the new sovereign was to 648*
last only a few months, for as soon as news of the disorder reached 175*
Hue the son of Som-Phou (1) resolved to abandon his exile and

1. Sai-Ong-Hue, see p. 103, note 1.

come to Vientiane to claim the rights to the throne which he held through his father. As early as 1696 he had solicited an army from Le-Duy-Hiep, king of Annam, and his request was finally granted in exchange for recognition in advance of Annamite

643* capture later on in a return offensive (1).
175*

1. The Annals also state that two of his grandsons, Tia-Oun and Tiao-Thep, came and settled in Luang-Prabang during the wars which followed.

INTHA-SOM, KING 1727-1776.

643* Having attained his ends, Intha-Som had himself solemnly
587 crowned and married Khamone-Noi's wives. Only Thene-Sao seems
175* to have raised any objections to accepting her new husband. At
first she refused categorically, then proposed the condition that the
/428/ first son whom she should bear should inherit the succession. Intha-
Som agreed and all was arranged.

648* In the following year he received a mission from the Sip-Song-
643* Panas, whose leader, Pha-No-Muong of Muong-La, explained to
175* him that his master had to pay China a tribute of two elephants /189/
563 which he had not been able to procure in his territory and which he begged his neighbor to be so kind as to furnish him.

Intha-Som had too many obligations towards this prince not to present them to him gratis, but he profited by the occasion in order to inform the envoys of the trouble being caused him by his former allies, the "Mousseux," who, according to him, were mistreating the inhabitants of the region and against whom he was powerless precisely by reason of the services which they had rendered him before his accession to the throne. Could not the embassy from the Sip-Song-Panas ask the emperor of China to recall these people to their homes (1)?

1. Intha-Som's grounds for complaint against the "Mousseux" seem rather improbable if we may judge of them by their present-day descendants, who are gentle, out-going and hospitable. Patriarchal in their mores, they had fled the insurrections in Yunnan and were then seeking in Laotian territory only the tranquillity which they could not find in their own land. We are therefore justified in seeing in Intha-Som's accusations against them a mark of the spirit of ingratitude and duplicity which he manifested in many circumstances of his troubled life.

Pha-No-Muong agreed to transmit this wish to Pekin, but observed that ambassadors who could speak directly in the name of the